

PSSA English Language Arts Glossary to the

Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content Aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards



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INTRODUCTION

The PSSA English Language Arts Glossary includes terms and definitions associated with the ELA Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards. The terms and definitions included in the glossary are intended to assist Pennsylvania educators in better understanding the PSSA Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content. The glossary does not define all possible terms included on an actual PSSA administration, and it is not intended to define terms for use in classroom instruction for a particular grade level or course. This glossary provides definitions for terms in Grades 3–8.

Term	Definition
Academic Words/ Phrases	Words and phrases that frequently occur in various contexts and topics and play important roles across different content areas (e.g., <i>theory, discourse, justify</i>). Such words may be abstract and occur in written language in school and in the workplace.
Acknowledge	To disclose agreement with; to recognize as valid.
Active Voice	When the subject of the sentence is the doer of the action in the sentence (e.g., <i>The man kicked the can</i>).
Adage	A saying that sets forth a general truth that has gained credibility through long use over time (e.g., <i>No risk, no gain</i>).
Adjective	A word or phrase that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun.
Adjective Clause	A dependent clause that modifies a noun or pronoun and is often introduced by a relative pronoun (<i>that, which, who, whom</i>).
Adverb	A word that modifies or describes a verb, adverb, or adjective.
Adverb Clause	A dependent clause that functions as an adverb in a sentence.
Affix	One or more letters occurring as a bound form attached to the beginning, end, or base of a word and serving to produce a derivative word or an inflectional form (e.g., a <i>prefix</i> or <i>suffix</i>).
Alliteration	The repetition of initial sounds in neighboring words.
Allusion	An implied or indirect reference in literature to a familiar person, place, or event.
Analogy	An extended comparison showing the similarities between two things.
Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The process or result of identifying the parts of a whole and their relationships to one another. 2. Using a close reading of text(s) to examine the relationships/connections among ideas, details, and/or examples referenced therein, as directed by a task.
Anecdote	A short account of a particular incident or event.
Antecedent	The noun to which a pronoun refers.
Antonym	A word that is the opposite in meaning to another word.
Argument	The position or claim the writer establishes. Arguments should be supported with valid evidence, and reasoning may be balanced by the inclusion of counterarguments to illustrate opposing viewpoints.

Term	Definition
Argumentative Writing	Writing that supports a position on or a claim about a particular topic through the use of logic, reasons, and evidence, often acknowledging and/or developing a counterclaim. It may have many purposes: to change the reader's point of view, to establish a call to action, or to get the reader to accept the writer's position or claim. It is a reasoned, logical way of showing that the writer's position is valid.
Audience (Reading)	A group of listeners or viewers at a public event; the people reached by a literary or informational text.
Audience (Writing)	The intended readers of a piece of writing.
Author	A person who composes a literary or informational text.
Author's Point of View/Purpose	The author's opinion or feelings as evident or detailed in a text about a topic. Not to be confused with first-person, second-person, etc., point of view. The author's reason or intention for writing a text.
Bias	The subtle presence of a positive or negative approach toward a topic.
Biography	A written account of another person's life.
Body	The internal paragraphs within a piece of writing.
Cause/Effect (Reading)	Noting a relationship between actions or events such that one or more are the result of the other or others.
Cause/Effect (Writing)	An organizational structure in which the writer analyzes both the reasons and the results of an action, event, or trend.
Central Idea	The unifying element of a piece of a text.
Central Message	The author's statement of his/her beliefs.
Chapter	One of the divisions or sections in a book that is usually numbered or titled.
Character	A person, animal, or inanimate object portrayed in a literary work.
Character Types	The kinds of characters that appear as archetypes in literature. These commonly include the hero and the trickster.
Chronology	The sequential order in which events occur; the arrangement of events, dates, etc., in order of occurrence.
Claim	The thesis statement or main point that forms the basis for an argument within a text.

Term	Definition
Classification	A strategy a writer uses to group ideas that are similar or related.
Clause	A group of words that contains a subject and predicate. An independent clause can stand as a sentence. A dependent, or subordinate, clause must be attached to an independent clause to form a sentence.
Cohesion	A quality of writing where ideas, details, and arguments move logically and fluidly throughout a piece of writing.
Comparative Adjective	The form that an adjective takes when comparing a quality shared by two different things. The comparative form is usually indicated by adding the suffix <i>—er</i> at the end of the adjective (e.g., <i>a faster car</i> , <i>a colder day</i>). An adjective with three or more syllables indicates the comparative form by using <i>more</i> or <i>less</i> instead of adding the suffix at the end (e.g., <i>a more constructive meeting</i> , <i>a less interesting story</i>).
Comparative Adverb	The form that an adverb takes when comparing an act or manner of two different things. One-syllable adverbs not ending in <i>—ly</i> form the comparative by taking the suffix <i>—er</i> (e.g., <i>A falcon can fly faster than a robin</i> OR <i>The snow will be here sooner than you think</i>). An adverb with three or more syllables usually forms the comparative with <i>more</i> or <i>less</i> (e.g., <i>The spring report was more thoroughly completed than the fall report</i> OR <i>The new data was recorded less accurately than the previous data</i>).
Compare/Contrast	To place characters, situations, or ideas together to show common and/or differing features in literary selections.
Comparison/Contrast (Writing)	An organizational structure in which the writer explores how two or more things are alike and how they are different.
Complex Sentence	A sentence that consists of at least one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause (e.g., <i>When the time comes, we will know what to do</i>).
Compound Sentence	A sentence that consists of two or more independent clauses and no subordinate clauses (e.g., <i>He washed the dishes, and I dried them</i>).
Compound-Complex Sentence	A sentence that consists of at least two independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause (e.g., <i>The runner did not know that the course had been changed, so she missed an important turn</i>).
Conclusion	A decision based on reasoning rather than on a direct or implicit statement.

Term	Definition
Conclusion or Concluding Section (Writing)	The final paragraph or section of a piece of writing that provides a sense of completeness for the reader as well as a re-emphasis of main points/ideas. The conclusion should not serve as simply a summary but should leave the reader with a clear impression of what has been discussed.
Conditional	A quality of a verb in the subjunctive mood used to express a condition that is hypothetical, highly doubtful, or contrary to fact. A conditional is a complex sentence consisting of an independent clause and a dependent clause that might begin with <i>if</i> , <i>as if</i> , or <i>as though</i> .
Conflicting Evidence	Information in a text that disagrees with an author's articulated point of view.
Conflicting Information	Information that is not in agreement.
Conflicting Viewpoint	An opinion expressed in a text that disagrees with an author's expressed point of view.
Conjunction	A connecting word. Coordinating conjunctions (<i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>so</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>nor</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>yet</i>) connect two equal grammatical structures. Subordinating conjunctions (<i>after</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>although</i>) emphasize the importance of one grammatical structure over the other.
Connection	A relationship or association between one or more individuals, ideas, or events.
Connotation/ Connotative Meaning	The range of associations that a word or phrase suggests in addition to its dictionary meaning (e.g., <i>slender/thin/scrawny</i>).
Context Clue	A word, words, or a phrase in a sentence, paragraph, and/or whole text that help reason out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
Contribute	To be an important fact in; help to cause.
Controlling Point/Idea	See Central Idea.
Convey	To communicate or make known.
Coordinate Adjectives	Two or more successive words in a sentence that modify or describe the same noun (e.g., <i>It was a boring, uneventful meeting</i>).
Coordinating Conjunction	A word that connects words, phrases, or clauses of equal grammatical structure (e.g., <i>for</i> , <i>and</i> , <i>nor</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>yet</i> , <i>so</i> OR <i>Mark asked us to call him but he did not leave his number</i>).

Term	Definition
Correlative Conjunction	Words that are used in pairs to connect parallel elements (e.g., <i>not only . . . but also, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, both . . . and</i> OR <i>Not only the windows but also the doors need maintenance before winter</i>).
Counterclaim	An argument that is in opposition to the claim/position provided in a piece of argumentative writing. It is a means to provide a balance between the claim/position and its opposing views. This adds credibility to the writing by allowing a broader range of viewpoints.
Dangling Modifier	A modifier that is not clearly attached to the word or phrase it is supposed to be modifying (e.g., <i>To learn how to drive, the summer was spent behind the wheel at the training course</i>).
Dash	A punctuation mark (—) used to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements that require special emphasis; it is also used to indicate a sudden break in a sentence.
Definition	The formal statement of the meaning of a word.
Delineate	To describe or outline with precision.
Demonstrate	To make evident or prove.
Denotation	The direct or dictionary meaning of a word.
Describe	To convey the appearance, nature, and/or attributes of literary or informational text using vivid personal observations. With description, there is a use of sensory details that allows the reader to picture or relive what is being told.
Diagram	A drawing that shows the appearance, structure, or the workings of something; a schematic representation that explains how something works or shows the relationship between parts of a whole.
Dialogue	1. In the widest sense, dialogue is simply conversation between characters or speakers in a literary work, referring specifically to the speech of characters in a drama. 2. The conversation between or among characters in a literary work.
Difference	Variation or diversity among qualities or characteristics.
Distinction	A difference or discrimination made between two or more individuals, ideas, or events.
Distinguish	To mark off as different; to recognize the prominent features of.

Term	Definition
Domain-Specific Vocabulary	Vocabulary specific to a particular field of study (domain).
Domain-Specific Words/Phrases	Low-frequency words and phrases that are content-specific and that commonly appear in textbooks and other instructional materials (e.g., <i>apex</i> , <i>isotope</i> , <i>key signature</i>). These words do not occur frequently in everyday life.
Drama	The genre of literature represented by works intended for the stage; a work to be performed by actors on stage, radio, or television; a play.
Elaborate/Elaboration	Expressing an idea or thought at greater length or in greater detail.
Element of Fiction	A trait that marks a work as imaginative or narrative discourse (e.g., <i>plot</i> , <i>theme</i> , <i>symbol</i>).
Ellipsis	An omission of an element from a quoted passage; the omission is indicated by three spaced periods called ellipsis points.
Evaluate	To examine and judge carefully. To judge or determine the significance, worth, or quality of something; to assess.
Event	An occurrence within a piece of literary text that comprises the plot; an episode that occurs in informational text that is part of time-order sequence.
Event Sequence	The order of events in a narrative.
Evidence (Reading)	Information or details from a text that support a reader's assertion (e.g., <i>quotations</i> , <i>paraphrases</i> , <i>descriptions</i>).
Evidence (Writing)	Facts, statistics, details, quotations, or other sources of data and information that provide support for claims or an analysis; can be evaluated by others.
Example	An instance that serves as an illustration of a point, principle, or model.
Explain	To make understandable, plain, or clear.
Explicit	Clearly expressed or fully stated in the actual text.
Fable	A brief story that illustrates human character traits through animal characters or animated objects and relays a life lesson.
Fact	A piece of information provided objectively and presented as true.
Fantasy Story	A genre of literature in which events occur outside the ordinary laws that operate within the universe; often magic is central to fantasy, as well as journeys or quests.

Term	Definition
Fictional Portrayal	Any story that is the product of imagination rather than a documentation of fact. Characters and events in such narratives may be based in real life but their ultimate form and configuration are creations of the author.
Figurative Language	Language that cannot be taken literally since it was written to create a special effect or feeling.
Figurative Meaning	The metaphorical, idiomatic, or ironic sense of a word or expression, in contrast to its literal meaning.
Figure of Speech	A word or phrase used in a nonliteral sense to convey meaning or to heighten effect (e.g., <i>hyperbole</i> , <i>simile</i> , <i>metaphor</i>).
First Person	The “first person” or “personal” point of view relates events as they are perceived by a single character. The narrating character may offer opinions about the action and characters that differ from those of the author.
Firsthand Account	An account directly from an original or primary source; coming from or being a direct personal observation or experience.
Focus	The center of interest or attention.
Folktale	An anonymous and timeless story that has been handed down orally over time among a people.
Form	The overall structure or shape of a work that frequently follows an established design. A form may refer to a literary type (narrative, short story) or to patterns of meter, lines, and rhymes (stanza, verse).
Formal Writing Style	The use of appropriate English in writing that demonstrates either a formal style that creates an objective tone and values logic, evidence, and reason, or a less formal style that creates a tone suited to the audience and subject, but still values logic, evidence, and reason.
Fragment	A group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with punctuation but is not a complete sentence because it lacks a subject or predicate or both (e.g., <i>Playing in the snow on a winter day</i>).
Future Perfect Progressive	The quality of a future perfect tense that indicates a continuous or progressive act or condition that is occurring before another future action or condition. It is formed by adding <i>will have been</i> to the present participle form of the verb (e.g., <i>In October I will have been coming to this restaurant every Sunday for two years</i>).

Term	Definition
Future Perfect Tense	The future perfect tense is formed by adding <i>will have</i> to the past participle of the verb. It indicates an act, condition, or state that is expected to be finished before another future point in time (e.g., <i>By the time the school year ends, I will have read more than twenty books</i>).
Future Progressive	The quality of a future tense that indicates an act or condition that will be continuous or progressive at some point in the future. It is formed by adding <i>will be</i> to the present participle form of the verb (e.g., <i>The staff will be working all day tomorrow</i>).
Generalization	A conclusion drawn from specific information that is used to make a broad statement about a topic or person.
Genre	A category used to classify literary works, usually by form, technique, or content (e.g., <i>prose, poetry</i>).
Gerund	The present participle (<i>—ing</i>) form of a verb used as a noun (e.g., <i>Running is my favorite form of exercise</i>).
Gerund Phrase	A group of words consisting of a gerund and any modifiers or complements it may have (e.g., <i>Mark chose giving a speech to the class as his final unit assignment</i>).
Grammar	The system of rules that provides definition and structure to a given language.
Heading, Graphic, and Chart	Any visual cue on a page of text that offers additional information to guide the reader's comprehension. A heading typically is words or phrases in bold print that indicate a topic or the theme of a portion of text; a graphic may be a photograph, drawing, map, or any other pictorial representation; a chart (or table or graph) condenses data into a series of rows, lines, or other shortened lists.
Historical Account	A text that shows the development of a historical event or events in proper chronological order.
Historical Event	An event that has taken place in the past, often including an explanation or a commentary on that event.
Historical Novel	A genre of fiction that is based on historical settings, events, or people. The setting is drawn from history and the story may contain actual historical people, but the main characters are usually fictional.
Homograph	Two or more words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and sometimes different pronunciations (e.g., <i>bow</i> and <i>bow</i>).
Humor	The quality of a literary or informative text that makes the characters and/or situations seem funny, amusing, or ridiculous.

Term	Definition
Hyperbole	An exaggeration or overstatement (e.g., <i>I had to wait forever</i>).
Hyperlink	A highlighted word or image in a document or on a Website that can be clicked to go to another place in the same or different document or Website.
Idiom	An expression that is peculiar to itself grammatically and cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements (e.g., <i>raining cats and dogs</i>).
Illustrate/Illustration	To clarify by using examples.
Imperative Mood	The form a verb takes in sentences that express a command, request, or permission; known as the understood <i>you</i> , the subject of a sentence in the imperative mood is usually omitted (e.g., <i>Read the report</i>).
Inappropriate Shift in Verb Tense	A grammatical error that occurs when the writer unnecessarily switches from one verb tense to another.
Incident	A distinct piece of action or episode in a literary text.
Indicative Mood	The form a verb takes in sentences that make a statement or ask a question.
Inference	A judgment based on reasoning rather than on a direct or explicit statement. A conclusion based on facts or circumstances; understanding gained by “reading between the lines.”
Infinitive	The word <i>to</i> plus the base form of a verb; can function as a verbal, modifying nouns, pronouns, adjectives, or adverbs.
Informal Writing Style	The use of everyday language in writing and speaking; informal writing style may employ a conversational tone. It favors emotion and personal preferences.
Informative Writing	Writing that examines a topic and conveys ideas, concepts, and information accurately. Its purpose may be to provide a reader with knowledge of a particular topic, to increase a reader’s understanding of a process, or to make concepts or ideas accessible to readers.
Integrate	To bring together or to combine information so as to produce a larger unit or a whole.
Intensive Pronoun	<p>A —<i>self</i> form pronoun that accompanies and emphasizes its antecedent in a sentence (e.g., <i>I will talk to him myself</i> OR <i>The actor himself wrote the screenplay</i>).</p> <p>Intensive Pronouns are <i>myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves</i>.</p>

Term	Definition
Interjection	A word that conveys emotion and has no grammatical relation to the sentence that follows (e.g., <i>Wow! That was fun</i>).
Interpret	To give reasons through an explanation to convey and represent the meaning or understanding of a text.
Interpretation of Facts	A conclusion drawn based on facts; the comprehension of facts in a particular way.
Interrogative	A sentence in the indicative mood that asks a question.
Introduction/Introduce	The opening of a piece of writing that is integral to what follows. The introduction grabs the reader's attention, establishes the main idea or thesis of the writing, and explains how the writing is going to develop. To present for the first time.
Irony	The use of a word or phrase to mean the exact opposite of its literal or usual meaning; incongruity between the actual result of a sequence of events and the expected result.
Irregular Plural Noun	A noun whose plural form is indicated in some way other than by adding <i>—s</i> , <i>—es</i> , or <i>—ies</i> (e.g., <i>children</i> , <i>sheep</i> , <i>halves</i>).
Irregular Verb	A verb whose past tense and past participle forms do not follow the same rule as regular verbs, which are formed by adding <i>—ed</i> , and usually, but not always, involve a vowel change (e.g., <i>swim</i> , <i>swam</i> , <i>swum</i> ; <i>drink</i> , <i>drank</i> , <i>drunk</i>).
Irrelevant	Not relating to an issue or that which does not support an issue.
Items in a Series	A list of three or more elements that are usually arranged in parallel form (e.g., <i>planes</i> , <i>trains</i> , and <i>automobiles</i>).
Judgment	An opinion formed or a decision made after consideration.
Key Concept	An important point or idea in a text.
Key Detail	A point of information in a text that strongly supports the meaning or tells the story. A statement that defines, describes, or otherwise provides information about the topic, theme, or main idea.
Key Event	An important occurrence within a text.
Key Word	A specific word choice in a text that strongly supports the tone, mood, or meaning of the text.
Lesson	Beneficial new knowledge that can be learned from a text.

Term	Definition
Literal Meaning	Involving an interpretation of a text or word at its most basic, nonfigurative meaning.
Literary Text	Imaginative or creative text that is generally a narrative or story.
Main Idea	The author's central thought; the chief topic of a text expressed or implied in a word or phrase; the topic sentence of a paragraph.
Map	A representation on a flat surface of the features of an area of the earth that shows them in their respective forms, sizes, and relationships, according to some convention of representation. Some types of maps include political, physical, topographic, climate, resource, road, and thematic.
Meaning	The interpretation or significance of a word, phrase, or text.
Memoir	A type of literary nonfiction in which the text is based on the personal experiences of the author.
Metaphor	The comparison of two unlike things in which no words of comparison (<i>like</i> or <i>as</i>) are used (e.g., <i>The speech gave me food for thought</i>).
Misplaced Modifier	A modifier that is separated from the word it is modifying (e.g., <i>We were surprised to see a deer driving down the gravel road</i>).
Modal Auxiliary	A verb that is used with the base form of a verb to express permission, possibility, or intention (e.g., <i>should, could, can, may, might</i> OR <i>We should invite everyone to the meeting</i>).
Modern	Pertaining to recent or present time.
Modifier	An adjective, adverb, phrase, or clause that describes/modifies other words in the sentence.
Moral	A lesson or principle contained in a text.
Multiple Accounts	More than one oral or written description of particular events or situations.
Multiple-Meaning Word	A word that has several meanings depending on how it is used in a sentence.
Myth	A story that tries to explain the origin of the world or natural phenomena. These stories are passed on from one generation to the next and usually contain gods, supernatural beings, or ancestral heroes. Most myths provide insight into the human condition or provide a lesson about human behavior.
Narration	A collection of events that tells a story and is placed in a particular order and recounted through either telling or writing.

Term	Definition
Narrative Technique	A storytelling tool or device an author uses to produce the desired artistic effect (e.g., <i>flashback, flash forward, foreshadowing, dramatic irony, situational irony, symbolism, interior monologue, pacing, point of view, metaphor, simile, personification, imagery</i>).
Narrative Writing	Writing that conveys experiences, either real or imaginary, using a sequence of events as its structure. Its purpose might be to inform, persuade, or entertain.
Narrator	A person, animal, or thing telling the story or giving an account of something.
Nonliteral Meaning	Involving the figurative meaning of words or phrases (e.g., <i>metaphors, similes, idioms</i>).
Nonrestrictive Element	A phrase or clause that is not grammatically essential to the sentence and that adds information about a noun or pronoun preceding it. This information is not essential to the meaning of the sentence; however, it may alter the meaning of the sentence (e.g., <i>Our first idea, to visit the museum in the morning and the zoo in the afternoon, did not go over well with the rest of the group</i>).
Noun	A word that names a person, place, thing, or idea.
Nuance	A subtle or slight degree of difference.
Objective	Not influenced by personal feelings or interpretations; unbiased; based on facts.
Objective Case Pronoun	<p>A pronoun that is the object of a verb is in the objective case (e.g., <i>Once students sat in their seats, the instructor gave them the class syllabus</i> OR <i>I don't know whom you hired to fix the sink, but it is still not working</i>).</p> <p>A pronoun that is the object of a preposition is in the objective case (e.g., <i>Our friends threw a nice party for John and me</i> OR <i>There were a few issues between Jane and him</i>).</p> <p>Objective Case Pronouns are <i>me, you, him, her, it, us, them, whom, whomever</i>.</p>
Opinion	A personal view, attitude, or appraisal.
Opinion Writing	A form of argumentative writing that supports an opinion on a topic with reasons, facts, and details.
Organizational Strategy	The writer's method of organizing text (e.g., <i>chronological, comparison/contrast, problem/solution</i>).
Paragraph	A collection of related sentences in a text that discuss a single topic.
Parenthetical Element	A word, words, or a phrase added to a sentence as an explanation, comment, or qualifier, often interrupting the flow of the sentence.

Term	Definition
Participial Phrase	A group of words containing a participle and any complements or modifiers it may have (e.g., <i>Traveling along its course, the airplane passed over the Bering Strait</i> OR <i>Found beneath layers of sediment, the ancient pottery was well preserved</i>).
Participles	Verbals that function as adjectives; they are formed by the present participle or past participle of the verb (e.g., <i>a swinging gate, a known quantity</i>).
Passive Voice	When the subject of the sentence receives the action of the verb (e.g., <i>The man was struck by lightning</i>).
Past Participle	One of the principal parts of a verb; it has both regular and irregular forms. It is used to form the perfect tenses of verbs (e.g., <i>has shown, had sung</i>). It also can function as a participle to modify a noun or pronoun (e.g., <i>the broken wheel, the tired dog</i>).
Past Perfect Progressive	The quality of a past perfect tense that indicates an act or condition that began and continued at a point in time prior to another past action. It is formed by adding <i>had been</i> to the present participle of the verb (e.g., <i>I had been working on my writing before the phone rang</i>).
Past Perfect Tense	The past perfect tense is formed by adding <i>had</i> to the past participle form of the verb. It indicates an act, condition, or state that occurred prior to another past time or action (e.g., <i>By the time we prepared to climb the mountain, it had already begun to snow</i>).
Past Progressive	The quality of a past-tense verb that indicates an act or condition that is continuous or progressive in the past. It is formed by adding <i>was</i> or <i>were</i> to the present participle form of the verb (e.g., <i>It was raining last night</i> OR <i>The clouds were drifting across the sky</i>).
Pattern of Events	The episodes that comprise the plot of a text.
Personification	An object or abstract idea given human qualities or human form (e.g., <i>Flowers danced about the lawn</i>).
Phrase (Reading)	A small group of related words within a sentence or a clause; a group of two or more words that expresses a single idea but does not form a complete sentence.
Phrase (Writing)	A group of words that does not contain a subject and a predicate.
Place	The location in which events in a text occur.

Term	Definition
Plot	The structure of a story. The sequence in which the author arranges events in a story. The structure often includes the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the resolution. The plot may have a protagonist who is opposed by an antagonist, creating what is called conflict.
Poem	In its broadest sense, a type of text that aims to present ideas and evoke an emotional experience in the reader through the use of meter, imagery, and connotative and concrete words. Some poems are carefully constructed based on rhythmic patterns. Poems typically rely on words and expressions that have several layers of meaning (figurative language). They may also make use of the effects of regular rhythm on the ear and may make a strong appeal to the senses through the use of imagery.
Point	A significant element or thesis in an argument within a text.
Point of View (Reading)	The narrator's perspective from which the events are depicted (e.g., first-person, third-person, etc.). The vantage point from which a story is told.
Point of View (Writing)	The writer's perspective from which events are depicted (by first-person, third-person). Also, see Author's Point of View.
Position	See Claim.
Possessive Case Pronoun	<p>A pronoun in the possessive case functions as an adjective modifying a noun by showing possession (e.g., <i>my dog, his book, her car</i>).</p> <p>Each possessive pronoun has a corresponding form called an independent pronoun (e.g., <i>the book of mine, the car of hers</i>).</p> <p>Possessive Case Pronouns are <i>my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs</i>.</p>
Predicate	One of two parts of a sentence; it is the part that says something about the subject of the sentence.
Preposition	A word that shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun to some other word in the sentence (e.g., <i>in, around, above, for</i>).
Prepositional Phrase	A phrase that consists of a preposition and its object (e.g., <i>around the corner, of the moment</i>).
Present Participle	One of the principal parts of a verb; it is formed by adding <i>—ing</i> to the base form of the verb. It can function as a participle, a gerund, or a continuous/progressive tense (e.g., <i>going, running, talking</i>).

Term	Definition
Present Perfect Progressive	The quality of a present perfect tense that indicates an act or condition that started in the past and continues into the present and future. It is formed by adding the auxiliary <i>has been</i> or <i>have been</i> with the present participle of the verb (e.g., <i>I have been driving for only twenty minutes</i>).
Present Perfect Tense	The present perfect tense is formed by adding <i>has</i> or <i>have</i> to the past participle form of the verb. It indicates an act, condition, or state that is completed in the near past or continues up or into the present (e.g., <i>I have just finished my work</i> OR <i>The weather has been nice all day</i>). It can also refer to a time in the indefinite past (e.g., <i>I have visited that park a few times</i>).
Present Progressive	The quality of a present-tense verb that indicates an act or state that is continuous or progressing in the present. It is formed by adding the auxiliaries <i>is</i> or <i>are</i> to the present participle form of the verb (e.g., <i>The band is playing my favorite song</i> OR <i>The flowers are blooming</i>).
Presentation (of Events)	The offering of information for others to consider.
Problem/Solution	A type of text structure in which a difficulty is identified and resolutions are proposed.
Pronoun	A word that takes the place of a noun or pronoun (e.g., <i>I, he, she, it, you, they</i>).
Pronoun Case	The function of a pronoun within a sentence. Pronouns change case to serve as subjects (subjective case), to serve as objects (objective case), and to form possessives (possessive case).
Pronoun Number	A pronoun will be either singular or plural in order to agree with its antecedent; if the antecedent is singular, then the pronoun referring to the antecedent must be singular as well.
Pronoun Person	Pronouns take one of three forms: first, second, or third person. First-person pronouns indicate the speaker (e.g., <i>I, me, we, us, our, ours, my, mine</i>). Second-person pronouns indicate the person or thing being spoken to (e.g., <i>you, your, yours</i>). Third-person pronouns indicate the person or thing being spoken about (e.g., <i>she, he, it, they, her, him, their, hers, his, its, theirs</i>).
Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement	A grammatical rule stating that a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number and person.

Term	Definition
Proverb	A saying that reflects truth and wisdom and has practical application to everyday life (e.g., <i>Two wrongs don't make a right</i>).
Pun	A humorous way of using a word or phrase so that more than one meaning is suggested (e.g., <i>The best way to communicate with fish is to drop them a line</i>).
Reason	The basis for a position expressed in a text; a statement expressed to justify or explain a belief.
Recognize	To perceive as true; to realize.
Recount	To provide a brief retelling of key events in the order of occurrence.
Relative Adverb	An adverb that begins an adjective clause (e.g., <i>where, when, why</i> OR <i>I clearly remember the place where we first met</i>).
Relative Pronoun	A word that refers to a noun or pronoun and introduces an adjective clause (e.g., <i>who, whom, whose, which, that</i> OR <i>My briefcase, which contains all of my important documents, is still lost</i>).
Relevant	Evidence that is pertinent and that supports a given claim.
Relevant Details (Reading)	Details that relate to the central idea of a text.
Relevant Details (Writing)	Words, phrases, sentences, and details that are vital and illustrative to a piece of writing. Relevant details support central ideas; provide evidence, examples, and reasons; and generally enrich a piece of writing.
Resolution	The part of a story following the climax in which the conflict is resolved. The resolution of Jane Austen's <i>Northanger Abbey</i> is neatly summed up in the following sentence: "Henry and Catherine were married, the bells rang, and everybody smiled."
Restate	A clear redeclaration of particulars or facts in speech or in writing.
Rhyme	The repetition of an identical or similarly accented sound or sounds in a work (e.g., <i>plain/stain</i>). End rhymes exist in words that rhyme at the end of a verse-line. Internal rhymes exist in words that rhyme within a verse-line.
Root	The form of a word after all affixes are removed. This form cannot be broken down into simpler elements and carries the principle meaning of the word in which it functions (e.g., <i>auto</i> — is the root in the word <i>automatic</i>).
Run-On Sentence	Two or more complete sentences without correct punctuation or conjunctions.

Term	Definition
Scene	A dramatic sequence that takes place within a single setting on stage. The place where an action or event occurs.
Secondhand Account	An account not directly known or experienced but obtained from others.
Section	Any of the parts into which a text or book may be divided.
Sensory Language	Details that involve one or more of the five senses; writers use sensory language to create a strong impression on readers.
Sentence	A grammatical unit, composed of a subject and a predicate, that expresses a complete thought.
Sentence Structure	The words, phrases, and clauses that make up a sentence, and the order in which they appear.
Sequence	The following of one thing after another.
Sequence of Steps	A literary organizational form that presents the order in which tasks are to be performed.
Setting	The time and place in which a story unfolds.
Shades of Meaning	The small, subtle differences in meaning between similar words or phrases (e.g., <i>knew/believed/suspected</i>).
Shape Presentation	To give a certain form or organization to information offered to the reader; to come to a desired conclusion or to take place in a certain way.
Similarity	Showing resemblance in qualities or characteristics; alike but not identical.
Simile	A comparison of two unlike things in which a word of comparison (<i>like</i> or <i>as</i>) is used (e.g., <i>The ant scurried as fast as a cheetah</i>).
Simple Future Tense	<p>The simple future tense is formed by adding <i>will</i> to the base form of the verb. It refers to an expected act, condition, or state (e.g., <i>The artist will paint the scene</i>).</p> <p>The simple future tense is also formed by adding <i>shall</i> to the base form of the verb (e.g., <i>We shall finish the yard work tomorrow</i>).</p> <p>The simple future tense may also be indicated by adding <i>is going</i> or <i>are going</i> to an infinitive (e.g., <i>The committee is going to discuss the issue at tonight's meeting</i>).</p>

Term	Definition
Simple Past Tense	The simple past tense is indicated by the past form of the verb. It shows acts, states, or conditions that happened or existed at some point in the past (e.g., <i>The weather was nice yesterday</i> OR <i>The ship sailed across the sea</i>).
Simple Present Tense	The simple present tense is formed by using the base form of the verb. It shows acts, conditions, or states that occur in the present (e.g., <i>The light is bright</i> OR <i>Amber volunteers in her community</i>). The simple present tense can also express an action that is habitual or a general truth (e.g., <i>Our teacher gives good advice</i> OR <i>Some birds migrate south for the winter</i>).
Simple Sentence	A sentence that consists of one independent clause and no subordinate clauses (e.g., <i>The cat climbed up the tree</i>).
Soliloquy	A dramatic speech, revealing inner thoughts and feelings, spoken aloud by one character while alone on the stage.
Sonnet	A lyric poem of fourteen lines with rhymes arranged according to certain definite patterns. A sonnet usually expresses a single idea with a reversal or change in direction in the concluding lines. There are two common forms for sonnets: Italian and English.
Sound Reasoning	Reasoning that is valid; a sound argument is one in which the conclusion follows from the premises and in which the premises are true. Sound reasoning uses experiment or direct demonstration; statistics, instances, and examples; comparison or analogy; inference; accepting the statement of authority; and/or cause and effect.
Speaker	The voice used by an author to tell/narrate a story or poem. The speaker is often a created identity and should not automatically be equated with the author. See also Narrator and Point of View.
Stanza	An arrangement of lines of verse in a pattern usually repeated throughout a poem. Usually, each stanza has a fixed number of verses or lines, an overall meter, and a consistent rhyme scheme.
Step	One of a sequence of separate consecutive stages in a process or in the progression of a goal.
Story	An account of imaginary or real events told for the purpose of entertainment.
Story Element	One of the essential components of a story (e.g., <i>character, setting, plot</i>).
Structure	How information within a text is organized (e.g., <i>chronology, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution, question/answer</i>).
Style	The author's choices regarding language, sentence structure, voice, and tone in order to communicate with the reader.

Term	Definition
Stylistic Technique	One of various ways in which the writer may employ multiple elements of writing to distinguish and strengthen a piece of writing. These include variations in sentence structure, word choice, tone, usage, and point of view.
Subject	One of two parts of a sentence; it is the part about which something is being said. It is sometimes used to refer to the simple subject, which is the main word in the subject that names the person, place, or thing being spoken about in the sentence.
Subject Knowledge	The theoretical or practical understanding of a topic; the facts, information, and skills gained through experience or education; the key concepts, knowledge, and skills that define a subject.
Subjective Case Pronoun	A pronoun that follows a verb <i>to be</i> and refers to the subject of the clause is in the subjective or nominative case (e.g., <i>Was that she at the door</i> OR <i>It was I who reported the crime</i>). Subjective Case Pronouns are <i>I, you, he, she, it, we, they, who, whoever</i> .
Subjective (Nominative) Case	A pronoun that is the subject of a verb is in the subjective or nominative case (e.g., <i>When reporters hear about a good story, they waste little time looking for answers</i> OR <i>Have you heard who is attending the ball?</i>).
Subject-Verb Agreement	A grammatical rule in which the subject of a sentence must agree with its verb in both number and tense.
Subjunctive Mood	The property of a verb that expresses an action or state not as a reality but as something that could happen or be imagined. The subjunctive mood is used to express a necessity, demand, or wish. It can also express an action or state that is conditional, hypothetical, or contrary to fact.
Subordinating Conjunction	A word that begins a dependent adverb clause and connects the dependent adverb clause to the main clause of a sentence (e.g., <i>when, before, after, because, since</i> OR <i>Betty must attend tonight's performance because she is a featured soloist</i>).
Sufficient	Evidence that is adequate to support.
Summarize	To capture all of the most important parts of the original text (paragraphs, story, poem) but express them in a much shorter space and as much as possible in the reader's own words.

Term	Definition
Superlative Adjective	<p>The form an adjective takes when comparing at least three different things. The superlative form is usually indicated by adding the suffix <i>—est</i> to an adjective of one or two syllables (e.g., <i>the closest store, the smallest block</i>).</p> <p>An adjective with three or more syllables will form the superlative by using <i>most</i> or <i>least</i> (e.g., <i>the most exciting moment, the least admirable trait</i>).</p>
Superlative Adverb	<p>The form an adverb takes when comparing at least three different things. One-syllable adverbs form the superlative by taking the suffix <i>—est</i> (e.g., <i>The students who work the hardest will earn better grades</i>).</p> <p>An adverb with two or more syllables usually forms the superlative with <i>most</i> or <i>least</i> (e.g., <i>the most properly arranged items</i> OR <i>the student who participated the least willingly</i>).</p>
Support	To uphold an argument or position through reasons and evidence (e.g., <i>statistics, expert opinion, examples</i>).
Supporting Idea	An idea that explains more about a main idea.
Suspense	The quality of a literary work that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events. An author creates suspense to maintain the interest of the reader or audience.
Synonym	A word that is similar in meaning to another word (e.g., <i>sorrow, grief, sadness</i>).
Tag Question	A question that the speaker or writer adds to the end of a statement (e.g., <i>The play was good, wasn't it</i>).
Task (Writing)	The assignment. Factors that affect the task are purpose, audience, and organizational structures.
Technical	Pertaining to a particular subject, field, profession, or trade.
Technical Meaning	The meaning of a word as it relates to a particular subject, discipline, field, profession, or trade.
Technical Procedure	A process or method used to accomplish a certain task within a particular field such as art or science.
Technical Word/Phrase	A word or phrase that relates to a particular subject, discipline, field, profession, or trade.
Text Feature	Print features as well as graphic, informational, and organizational aids (e.g., <i>bold print, italics, maps, charts, labels, headings</i>).

Term	Definition
Text Structure	The author's method of structuring a text; the way a text is structured from beginning to end. In literary works, the structure could include flashback and foreshadowing, for example. In nonfiction works, the structure could include sequence, question-answer, or cause-effect, for example.
Theme	A topic of discussion or work; a major idea broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work. A theme may be stated or implied. Clues to the theme may be found in the prominent and/or recurring ideas in a work.
Third Person	A perspective in literature, the "third-person" point of view presents the events of the story from outside of any single character's perception, much like the omniscient point of view, but the reader must understand the action as it takes place without any special insight into characters' minds or motivations.
Time	When events in a text take place.
Timeline	A way of displaying a list of events in chronological order using a graphic that shows a long bar with dates and events labeled on points of the line.
Tone (Reading)	The attitude of the author toward the audience, the characters, the subject, or the work itself (e.g., <i>serious</i> , <i>humorous</i>).
Tone (Writing)	As established by the writer, the attitude that is expressed toward the audience and topic through a piece of writing.
Topic (Reading)	The subject matter of a text or of a discussion.
Topic (Writing)	The subject of a piece of writing.
Trace	To follow or determine the course of an argument within a text.
Traditional Stories/Literature	The ancient stories or poems of many cultures that originate in the oral tradition; many of these texts have no known original authors.
Trait	An adjective that describes a character in a literary text and expresses a specific quality about the character (e.g., <i>selfish</i> , <i>industrious</i> , <i>humorous</i>).
Transitions	A word, phrase, or sentence that is used to create coherence in writing by showing the relationships of ideas between sentences and/or paragraphs.
Usage	Choosing and using the correct word in written text. Common errors in usage are found in comparisons (<i>older/oldest</i>), verbs (<i>lie/lay</i>), and expressions (<i>fewer/less</i>).

Term	Definition
Vague Pronoun	A pronoun whose antecedent is not clear or is ambiguous (e.g., <i>My favorite musical group will be playing a concert this Saturday, which makes me very happy</i>).
Verb	A word or phrase that expresses action or a state of being.
Verb Mood	A property of a verb that indicates the manner of an action; there are three moods: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive.
Verb Tense	The tense of the verb shows the time of an act, state, or condition. The six tenses are present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect.
Verb Voice	A property of a verb that indicates whether the subject is the doer of the action or is receiving the action. There are two voices: active and passive.
Verbal	A form of a verb used as an adjective, adverb, or noun; there are three verbals: infinitives, gerunds, and participles.
Verse	A single metrical line of poetry.
Viewpoint	A perspective or opinion.
Word Choice	An author's use of words that affect the meaning, tone, and mood of a text.
Wordiness	When a writer uses more words than are necessary to provide a point, detail, or explanation (<i>due to the fact that</i> rather than <i>because</i>).
Writer's Purpose	The intent established by the writer to inform or teach, to entertain, or to persuade/convince. See also Author's Purpose.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment: ELA
Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content
with Sample Questions and Glossary
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